



News from the City of Greenville

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For Immediate Release

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Falls Park and Liberty Bridge Open to the Public

Greenville, SC... Enthusiastic crowds gathered today at Falls Park on the Reedy in downtown Greenville, South Carolina to celebrate the opening of the newly renovated park and the landmark pedestrian bridge. City officials and those instrumental in the park and bridge design and construction addressed the crowds and ceremoniously opened the park by cutting a floral ribbon at the bridge entrance. The \$13.4 million development project has been under construction for the past two years.

“Falls Park and the beautiful Reedy River Falls have regained their rightful place of prominence in our city,” said Mayor White at the dedication ceremony. “I invite everyone to visit the park, take a walk on the bridge and enjoy this spot that is the birthplace of Greenville.”

For many years, the area played a prominent role in Greenville’s growth and quality of life. But in the mid-twentieth century, the river and surrounding land went through a severe decline. The water was polluted and the grounds were littered with river debris and trash. In 1960, the Camperdown Bridge was built across the falls, obstructing public view and creating a barrier for public access.

The area took a turn for the better in the mid-1980s when the Carolina Foothills Garden Club and the City of Greenville adopted a Master Plan for the park that would restore the beauty of the area and provide a safe and welcoming gathering spot for individuals

and groups.

Fifteen years later, with the removal of the Camperdown Bridge making way for extensive renovations, a second and more dramatic redevelopment plan was put in place. Using funds generated through a local hospitality tax, and building on the master plan designed in 1999 by landscape architect Andre Mains, Falls Park was developed to encompass 20 acres of gardens showcasing Reedy River Falls. A 355-foot-long, 12-foot-wide, curved, suspension bridge was designed by world renowned architect Miguel Rosales to provide dramatic views of the upper falls and the gardens below. Additional designs called for a new park building with two levels of plazas, a private restaurant, public restrooms, and the garden's maintenance facility to be located on the South Main Street end of the bridge.

The new Falls Park now includes two amphitheaters to host annual performances from the Upstate Shakespeare Festival, a story telling festival, Art in the Park, as well as numerous concerts and other public activities. Dozens of weddings, photography shoots and picnics are already on the reservations list for the new River Lodge shelter. Three seasons of blooming flowers will fill the garden with color making the picnic shelter an ideal setting for outdoor dining and personal special events. Interpretative signs are being installed along tree-shaded walking trails to explain the history of the area and the different horticultural aspects of the garden.

To commemorate the generous support of the Greenville community, a "Wall of Honor" has been installed to display the names of individuals and business who have cumulatively donated over \$3 million to the Falls Park Endowment. The endowment interest will be used to continue the garden's development and fund education programs at Falls Park.

Along with enhancing the quality of life for the Greenville community, the new Falls Park has generated an increase in economic development for downtown, already sparking a

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\$65 million public-private development directly across Main Street from the park. Potential private investment in the immediate area could reach 10 to 20 times the City's public investment.

The Parks and Recreation Department will offer both historical and horticultural tours with the garden manager. Tours will be geared for both youth and adult audiences. Kids can pick up a free coloring book filled with fun facts and puzzles about the park and its history.

Visitors may purchase shirts, hats, picture frames, silver charms and other merchandise featuring the Falls Park logo at the Convention and Visitors Bureau's Visitors Center, located in City Hall at 206 South Main Street.

Those interested in tour and rental information can visit the city website at www.greatergreenville.com or call 864 467-4355.

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